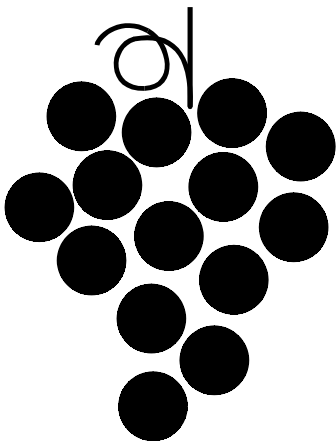




Recovering Small Fruits



Storm damage to small fruits shows itself in different ways, depending on crop growth habit as well as proximity to the storm. In addition to wind, too much water can adversely impact crops.

The following suggestions will help fruit growers evaluate damage and take corrective action.

- Where wind damage is significant, pruning should be as light as possible. However, if large areas of cambium are exposed the plant probably will not survive without attention. Make clean cuts to minimize the exposed cambium area. If the plant can be saved, several growing seasons may be needed to retrain.
- Many plants that are leaning or uprooted can be reset if the root ball is intact. Once reset, secure with stakes to immobilize them.
- Reshape altered dikes, terraces or raised planting beds to protect the area; cover exposed roots or provide a medium for new root growth. Use the smallest equipment possible to accomplish the job to minimize compaction and reduce further root damage.
- Strawberry plants can be secured within 10 days after the storm, however most plasticulture plantings should be replanted. The cost of replanting is relatively small compared to more expensive inputs—irrigation, plastic mulch and fumigation.

Premature defoliation caused by tremendous wind speeds will weaken fruits. Defoliation coupled with root damage causes additional stress because the root system serves as a storage reservoir for carbohydrates manufactured by the leaves. This reservoir supplies energy, without it, the plants may appear saved in the short run only to be killed during the winter.

Once the top damage has been pruned out and after the first freeze, apply nitrogen in a complete fertilizer at the rate of 30 pounds actual N per acre. This will help the plant start new root growth, which will continue during winter as long as the soil temperature is above 45°F.

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*Extension Agent's Hand-book
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“Test all irrigation water for salinity.”

Soil concentrations of 3,000 ppm soluble salt will make fruit culture very difficult. However, some fruits are much more salt-tolerant than others. Grapes, figs, pomegranates and pecans are examples of fruits that will not be hurt by increased salt concentrations as readily as blueberries, strawberries and blackberries.

If the soil salt concentration is high, irrigate frequently to help reduce the buildup of salt following evaporation.

Test all irrigation water for salinity. If irrigation ponds have been contaminated, pump them out and fill with clean river or well water. Rainfall, while complicating other cleanup activities, aids in flushing the soil.

If the sodium content is 250 ppm or more, internal drainage problems will occur. This can be corrected somewhat by the use of gypsum as a soil additive. Apply at the rate of 2 ounces of gypsum per square foot of area ($2 \frac{3}{4}$ tons per acre) and immediately irrigate to move the material into the soil profile.